

Group: 4

Year: 2017

Germany, Kaiserswerther Verband (KWV)

www.kaiserswerther-verband.de

Personnel

As the far largest member of DRAE (and of DIAKONIA World Federation) the KWV consists of approximately 70 diaconal communities, deaconess motherhouses and diaconal institutions throughout Germany. Altogether around 50,000 people are working within these institutions in every possible diaconal way. Among these employees there are around 1,600 deaconesses and around 3,000 diaconal sisters and brothers. KWV connects diaconal institutions and communities that have developed from the tradition of deaconess motherhouses. They still promote diaconal ministry as an important task of the church and foster communities of diaconal sisters and brothers.

Jubilees in 2016

In 2016, the KWV itself celebrated its 100th anniversary with a three-day event in Berlin. 350 participants gathered around the theme *100 Years into the Future*. The celebrations included the membership assembly (AGM) and a formal reception at Villa Elisabeth as well as a party (in connection with the 175 anniversary of the motherhouse Teltow-Lehnin) and a ship cruise.

Again, several members of KWV celebrated impressive jubilees:

180 years: Kaiserswerther Diakonie

175 years: Evangelisches Diakonissenhaus Berlin Teltow-Lehnin

165 years: Ev. Diakonissenanstalt Karlsruhe-Rüppurr; Stift Bethlehem, Ludwigslust

160 years: Großheppacher Schwesternschaft, Weinstadt

150 years: Diakonissenanstalt Emmaus, Niesky;

Ev. Diakonissenmutterhaus Frankenstein, Wertheim

140 years: Paul-Gerhardt Stift, Berlin

130 years: Ev. Diakoniewerk Schwäbisch Hall

125 years: Diakonissenmutterhaus Eisenach

Ev.-luth. Diakonissenhaus Leipzig;

120 years: Diakoniegemeinschaft Paulinenstift, Wiesbaden

And also, just as a curiosity: the host bakery in Dresden exists since 150 years!

Events/Celebrations

- As usual, the members of KWV gathered in four regional conferences under the common theme *Loyalty in Diversity: Regional Conferences Deal with the Mission Statement of KWV*. In 2016, the conferences took place in Flensburg, Wetzlar, Niesky and Darmstadt. The mission statement was accepted at the AGM 2015. Crucial for the work of KWV is the aim to help people in need practically and to foster an attitude of loving your neighbor and taking up

diaconal responsibility among the employees. The participants of the conferences discussed this aim in the light of today's society, which is affected by cultural and religious diversity.

- May, 2-4, 2016: More than 30 leading sisters gathered in Augsburg to discuss the theme *Our Call – How Do We Live Our Call Today?*
- November 22-23., 2016: More than 30 business directors, administrative directors and CEOs of KWV gathered in Berlin around the theme *Within the Crisis – Out of the Crisis. Prevention and Intervention of Economic Crisis in Diaconal Enterprises*. This conference was organized by the Law and Business Council of KWV, led by its president Sven Kost from Eisenach.
- November 24, 2016: Together with the other ViD (German Diaconal Associations) members, KWV organized a symposium at the church office of the Evangelical Church in Germany at Hannover, contemplating the theme *Community and Businesses – Common Responsibility for Diaconal Identity*. Around 90 participants discussed questions around the protestant profile of diaconal institutions. During the discussion it became clear that diaconal communities still are vital for diaconal institutions – if they find modern ways of living together and take up their responsibility as strategic partners for the diaconal institutions.

Highlights

- Just in time for the anniversary, KWV presented a new website and an app for apple and android cell phones.
- The motherhouse Witten could open a new museum on its compound.
- Again, the regional meetings of people, that have been to DIAKONIA/DRAE assemblies or are interested in going, took place in Northern Germany.

Issues/Concerns/Impediments/Challenges

As diaconal communities become smaller and smaller, diaconal institutions of KWV seek other ways to preserve at least the spirit of deaconesses within their businesses. With great success some of them offer a diaconal basic course for employees, for example Augsburg and Neuendettelsau. For me, this shows that there is still interest in learning more about diakonia and the Christian call to it – but people hesitate to commit themselves to a community with certain rules. But in a way they also form a kind of community and I wonder whether DIAKONIA/DRAE should try to find ways in including these people as well.

Publicity

Again, there are numerous articles and press relaises during 2016. But one highlight is the book *100 Years of Kaiserswerth Association* which was published just in time for the anniversary celebration. You can order it via the website.

Munich, January 12, 2017

Dr. Ulrike Ullmer

Group: 4

Year: 2017

Austria: Ev. Diakoniewerk, Gallneukirchen (EDG)

www.diakoniewerk.at

Personnel

The institution EDG is a major player in social work in Austria. They concentrated on the work with handicapped, especially mentally handicapped, and elderly people. In 170 institutions, like kindergarden, hospitals and schools, there work more than 3,800 people. Again, the EDG could expand its work during 2016.

On November 11, the former motherhouse, *Haus Bethanien*, was reopened after a throughout remodeling.

Personnel News:

EDG director Magister Christa Schrauf has terminated her office effecting the end of 2016.

New Developments

- Within the region *Oberösterreich* the EDG now provides a 24-hour-care service for elderly people.
- Through the project *Wissensbrücke* (bridge of knowledge) know how is transferred between the two kindergarden in Livno and Mostar (both in Bosnia-Herzegowina) and the EDG. There have been already interns from Livno in Gallneukirchen and there will be a workshop in Livno in spring 2017.

Events/Celebrations/

- *Bistro Mauthausen Memorial* is a shared project of EDG and KZ-Memorial Mauthausen where 8 handicapped people care for the visitors. At this special location the bistro is a clear sign for more tolerance, inclusion and equivalent opportunities. Therefore the project received the civil rights award of Austria 2016.
- Herwig Hack and Elisabeth Stachl, who live at the EDG, were awarded with the literature award *Ohrenschmaus* at Vienna. Their texts were chosen from more than 100 articles. The following panel discussion had the theme *No pity bonus, no embarassement, just literature?!* On the podium among others

Ruth Oberhuber, a handicapped author from Gallneukirchen, who I could meet at Gallneukirchen in 2015 (and hear some of her lyrics). All participants of the discussion agreed that texts from handicapped people are extremely authentic and their creativity in finding new words are important for the literature in total. For Ruth Oberhuber, writing is a possibility to express her thoughts and ideas.

- From October 27-28, 2016, Eurodiaconia invited together with the EDG to the next Marginalization and Exclusion Network Meeting. The meeting in Vienna focussed on the topic of migration: diaconia as a bedrock for the integration of migrants and social cohesion. During this meeting, Eurodiaconia facilitated an exchange of best practices between members working particularly in the area of service provision for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers.

Publicity

Numerous publications and mentions in local and nationwide newspapers. See websites.

Munich, January 11, 2017

Dr. Ulrike Zellner

Group: 4

Year: 2017

France: Communauté des Diaconesses de Reuilly (CDR)

www.diaconesses-reuilly.fr

Personnel

CDR is a community of monastic life rooted in Protestantism. Through meditation and praise, they try to live the Gospel after Christ. Founded in 1841 by Caroline Malvesin and Antoine Vermeil, the institution Deaconess Reuilly was recognized as a public utility since 1860. She took after the 1901 Act, the form of an association. By decree dated 24 November 2009, it became a Foundation whose scope covers three areas of intervention

Jubilee

On November 5, 2016 the celebration of the 175th anniversary started. Marguerite Lena, philosophy professor and member of the Xaverian Sisters, gave a lecture with the topic *Relevance and Irrelevance of Monastic Life Today*.

Afterwards, an almond tree was planted in the park and, fortunately, heaven spared them from rain. In the chapel, before the beginning of the service, one could see a set of wonderful photos of trees in all seasons. Representatives of various Churches, convents and communities attended. They sent messages full of gratitude and hope for the future. All guests were invited to write their hopes for the Church and for the world on coloured notes and pin those in the chapel's vestibule. The beautiful candle from the Kaiserswerth Association was lit on the altar! This eventful day concluded with a buffet.

But the festive days were not over yet: In the festive Divine Service on Sunday November 6th, the date the Community was founded, the bell which will, from now on, call us to pray the Offices three times a day, was rung for the first time. Inscribed on the bell are the words "watch and pray" – motto of the Sisterhood, as well as our founder's seal with the dates "6 novembre 1841 – 6 novembre 2016".

The third important moment was the jubilee celebration for three sisters – in the afternoon of November 6th, as well as the first, still temporary commitment, of our novice Sr. Perside.

It was a particular joy to have with us, throughout all these days, our three sisters from Tahiti, French Polynesia.

Events/Celebrations/

- February is always the month for contemplation. The guest house is closed and there are no meetings of the Foundation. Instead, groups of 8-9 sisters meditated on the rule of our sisterhood for two days.

- In April the community celebrated the 30th anniversary of consecration of Sister Joy from the Emanuel Sisters in Cameroon, a community founded by the Reuilly sisters. Sister Joy could join the community for 6 months.
- Beginning of June there was a *National Bible-Weekend* at the parish center right next to the community compound. 12 sisters joined the other 150 participants from all over France. They enjoyed the unconventional way of the bible study. The week was closed by a worship at the Chapel.
- The last guests before the summer break have been the members of the DIAKONIA World Federation Executive Committee. It was a good opportunity to get to know each other and meet the director of the *Foundation Diaconesses de Reuilly*.
- In mid-October was the traditional *Friends' Festival*, with festive prayers and songs that were exclusively *chansons* belonging to our community, which sing and reflect events of daily life and their relation to faith. The prayer intentions have been connected with world events, but also, in particular, with the daily reality in our different institutions. (Refugees, disabled children and young people, sick and elderly people.) Afterwards there was a festive meal in the adjoining big community hall, with a lecture by Dominique Quinio, former Editor in Chief of the important Catholic Newspaper *La Croix* with the theme *Journalist and Committed?* She gave an insight in the complexities of the journalistic profession in a Christian newspaper!
- In the first week of November the Community Retreat had the theme *Watching and Praying Today* and was led by Marguerite Lena, who also had a lecture at the anniversary.
- Finally, in December, there was the yearly two-day Big Bazaar which took place over the first Sunday of Advent and, as in every year, provided a wonderful opportunity for meeting people.

Publicity

On February 22, 2016 the former mother superior of the Reuilly Sisters, Sœur Evangéline Vié, published her book *Protestantisme et vie monastique: vers une nouvelle rencontre?*. It is a contribution to the 500th anniversary of the reformation.

Munich, January 12, 2017

Dr. Ulrike Hellner

Group: 4

Year: 2017

Poland: Diakonat Zenski "Eben-Ezer"

www.diakonat.luteranie.pl

Personnel

The Deaconess Motherhouse Eben-Ezer in Dzięgielów, Poland, was founded in 1923. It is the only deaconess motherhouse in Poland. They have close links to the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Poland.

Events/Celebrations/

In September (21.-25.) a diaconal study trip to Poland was offered by the Kaiserswerth General Conference. 40 participants, including the former President of German Diakonia, Pfr. Klaus-Dieter Kottnik, visited several diaconal places in Poland. On September 24, 2016, a diaconal study day took place at the Deaconess Motherhouse in Dzięgielów. Pfr. Kottnik spoke to the theme *Present Challenges for a Social Europe*. He talked about expectations and challenges of diakonia in Eastern Europe and referred to his experience as member of the Polish diakonia counsel. It is important to nurture and expand the good cooperation between Germany and Poland.

Issues/Concerns/Impediments/Challenges

According to Kottnik, for non-government organizations, such as diakonia, there is no help for investments by the state. Therefore there is a big need for help from abroad. Beside financial aid there is also a big demand of knowledge exchange and of professional counseling. In most cases, the cry for diaconal help comes directly from the parishes.

During the study day at Dzięgielów, also the General Secretary of Diakonia within the Lutheran Church in Poland, Wanda Falk, spoke. She reported the development of Polish diakonia within the past 10 years. She also mentioned the fate of so called *Euro-Orphans* and the growing poverty among the elderly.

Munich, January 11, 2017

Dr. Ulrike Hellner